creator/writer
DAVID MICHELINIE

artist
BRET BLEVINS

EPIC COMICS

editor
ARCHIE GOODWIN

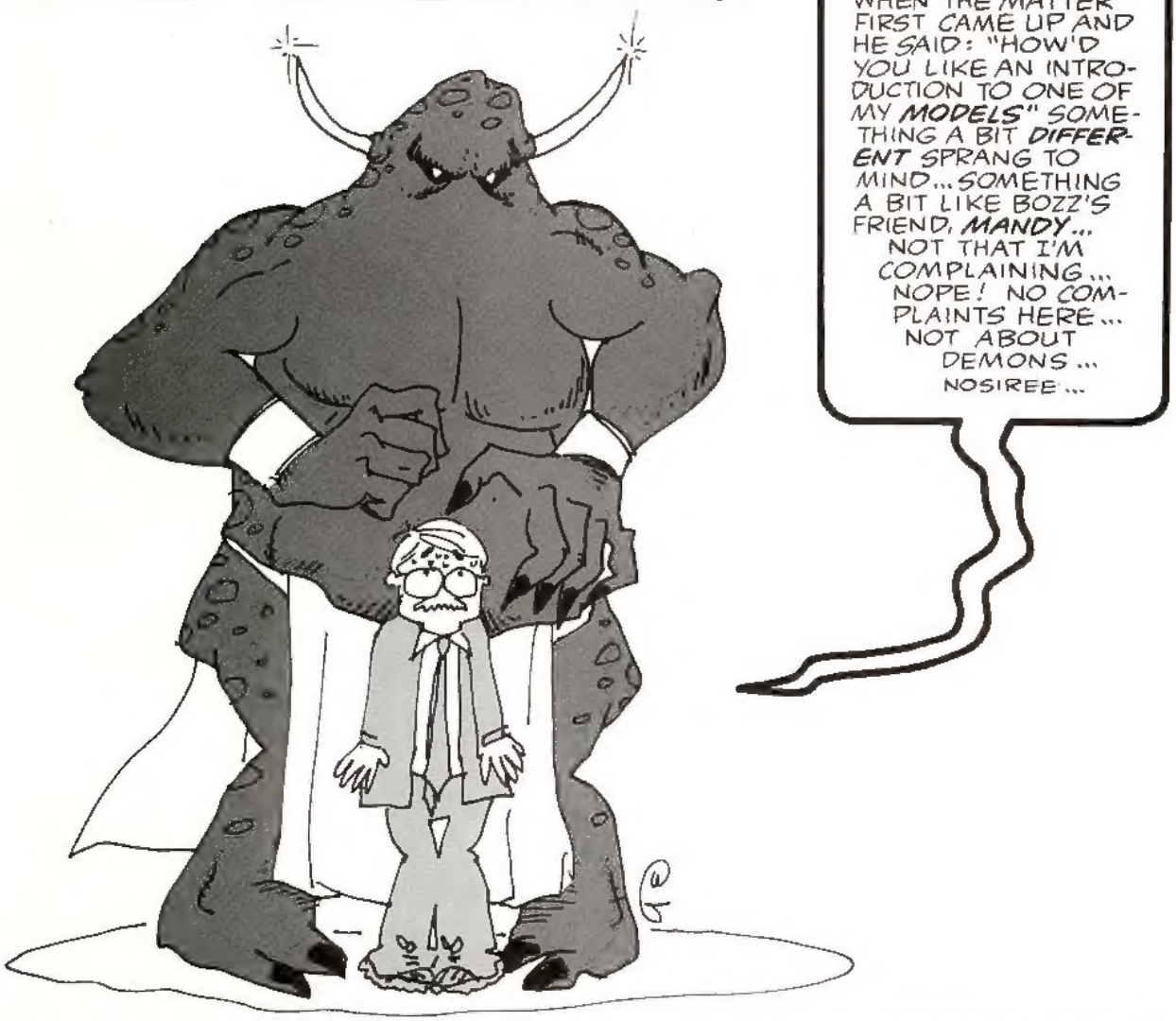
associate editor
MARGARET CLARK

colorist
STEVE OLIFF

letterer
PHIL FELIX

consulting editor
JIM SHOOTER

HELLO, I'M ***ARCHIE GOODWIN***, EDITOR OF MARVEL'S ***EPIC COMICS*** LINE. AS YOU'VE SEEN FROM OUR NIFTY COVER PAINTING BY ***BOZZ CHRONICLES'*** ARTIST, ***BRET BLEVINS***, THIS ISSUE'S STORY FROM CREATOR/WRITER ***DAVID MICHELINIE*** DEALS WITH ***DEMONS***. BUT I WOULD LIKE TO QUICKLY POINT OUT THAT THIS IS ***ONLY*** AN ENTERTAINMENT DEVICE AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS BEING IN ANY WAY ***CRITICAL*** OF ANYONE OF THE DEMONIAC PERSUASION ...



...***HECK, NO!*** WHY, WE'VE NEVER FOUND DEMONS TO BE ANYTHING LESS THAN FASCINATING AND WE'D REALLY LIKE TO ***THANK*** BRET FOR GIVING US THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ACTUALLY ***MEET*** ONE. OF COURSE, WHEN THE MATTER FIRST CAME UP AND HE SAID: "HOW'D YOU LIKE AN INTRODUCTION TO ONE OF MY ***MODELS***" SOMETHING A BIT ***DIFFERENT*** SPRANG TO MIND... SOMETHING A BIT LIKE BOZZ'S FRIEND, ***MANDY***... NOT THAT I'M COMPLAINING... NOPE! NO COMPLAINTS HERE... NOT ABOUT DEMONS... NOSIREE...

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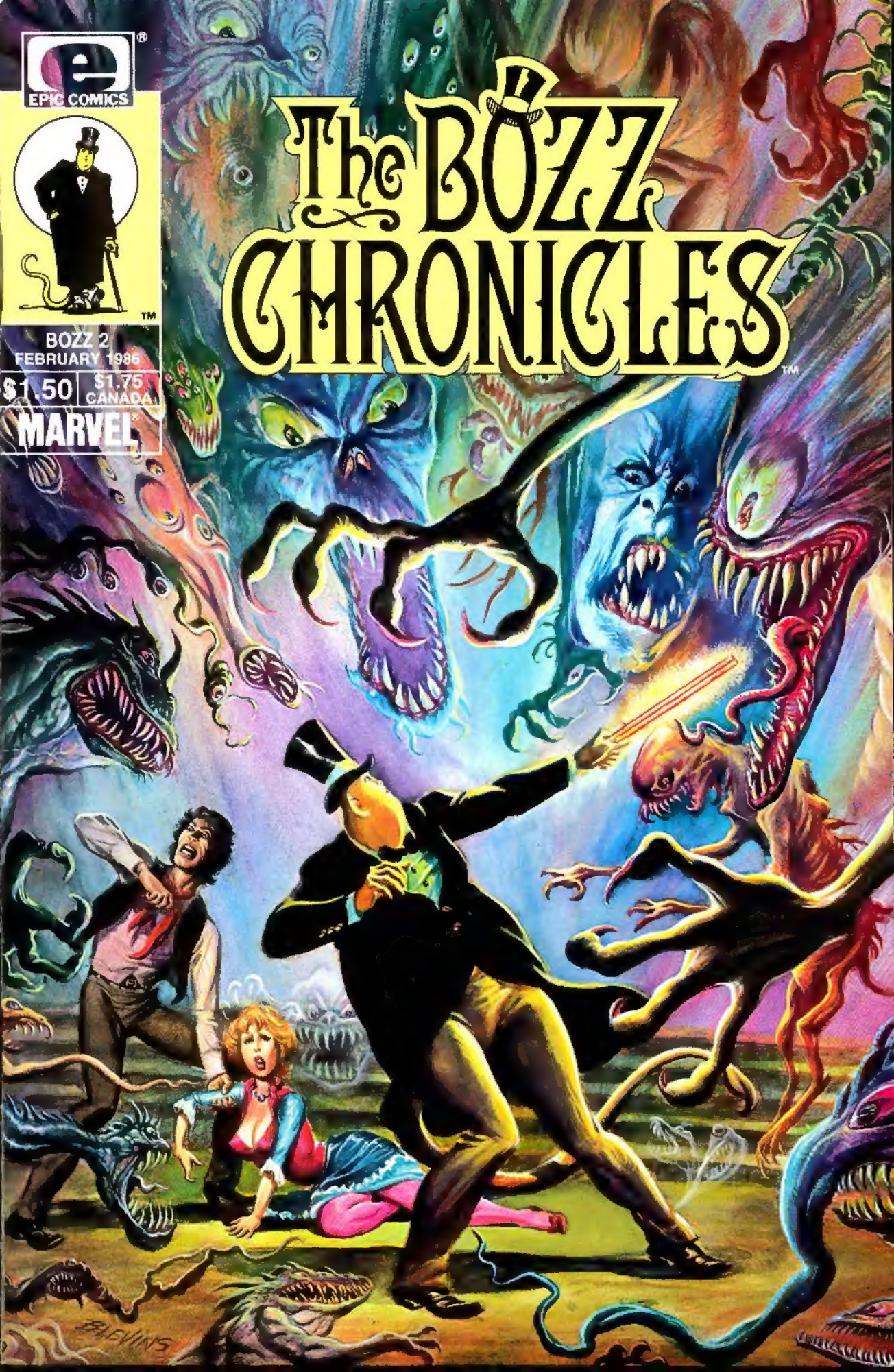
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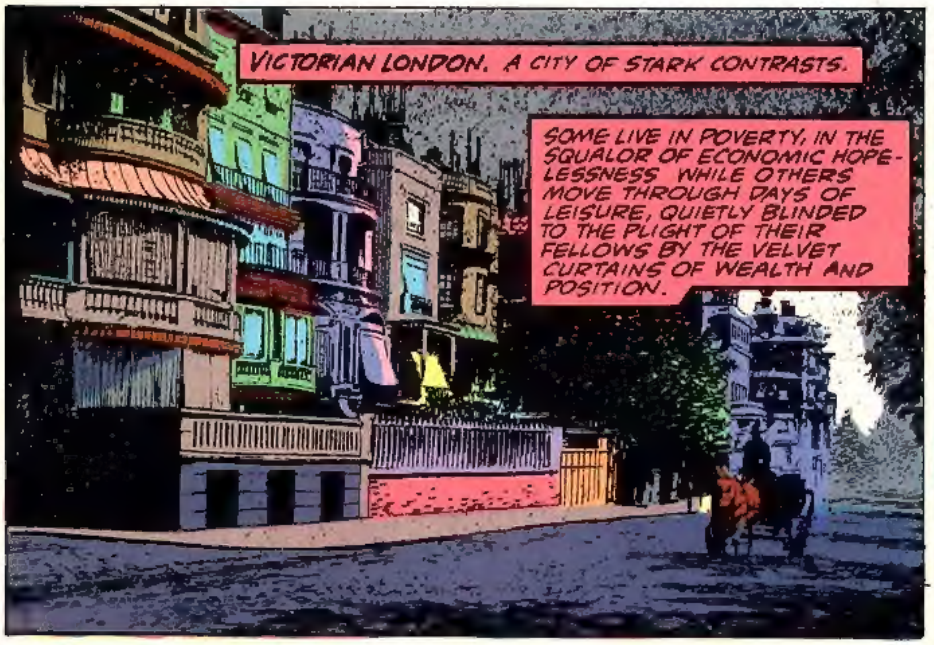
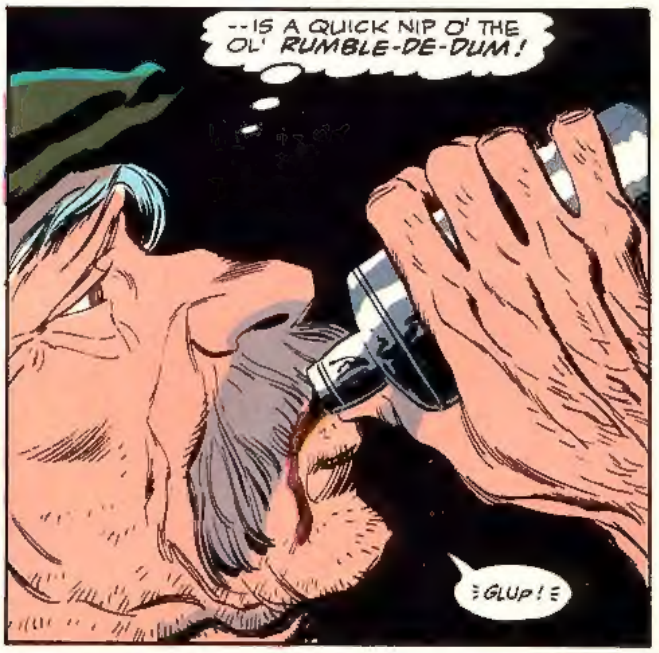

VICTORIAN LONDON. A CITY OF STARK CONTRASTS.
SOME LIVE IN POVERTY, IN THE SQUALOR OF ECONOMIC HOPELESSNESS WHILE OTHERS MOVE THROUGH DAYS OF LEISURE, QUIETLY BLINDED TO THE PLIGHT OF THEIR FELLOWS BY THE VELVET CURTAINS OF WEALTH AND POSITION.

WHILE STILL OTHERS WALK THE THIN LINE BETWEEN THOSE DISPARATE WORLDS. AND WALK IT DELICATELY INDEED...
BLIMEY! IN ALL ME YEARS O' THIEVIN', I AIN'T NEVER FELT LIKE THIS!

ME SKIN'S CRAWLIN', I'M SWEATIN' IN THE CHILL... MAYBE I'M GETTIN' TOO OLD FER PILFERIN' RICH FOLKS' LAIRS.
OR MAYBE ALL I NEED--


--IS A QUICK NIP O' THE OL' RUMBLE-DE-DUM!
GLUP!

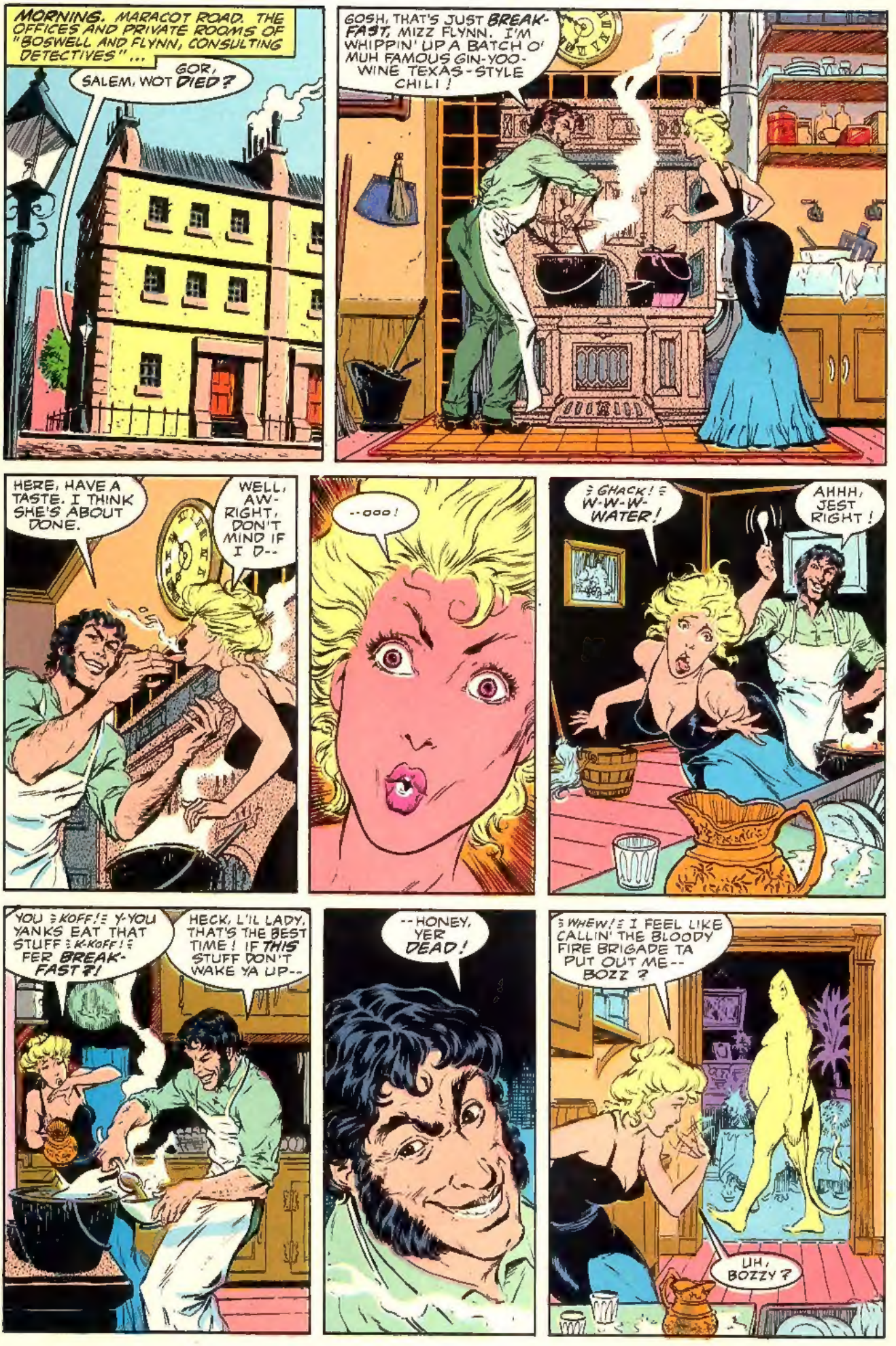
NAH. DIDN'T 'ELP NONE. NOW I'M EVEN GETTIN' A EARACHE!
MAYBE I OUGHTS TA FERGET IT, GO 'OME. LEAVE THE POSH TOFFS KEEP THEIR BAUBLES.
YEAH.

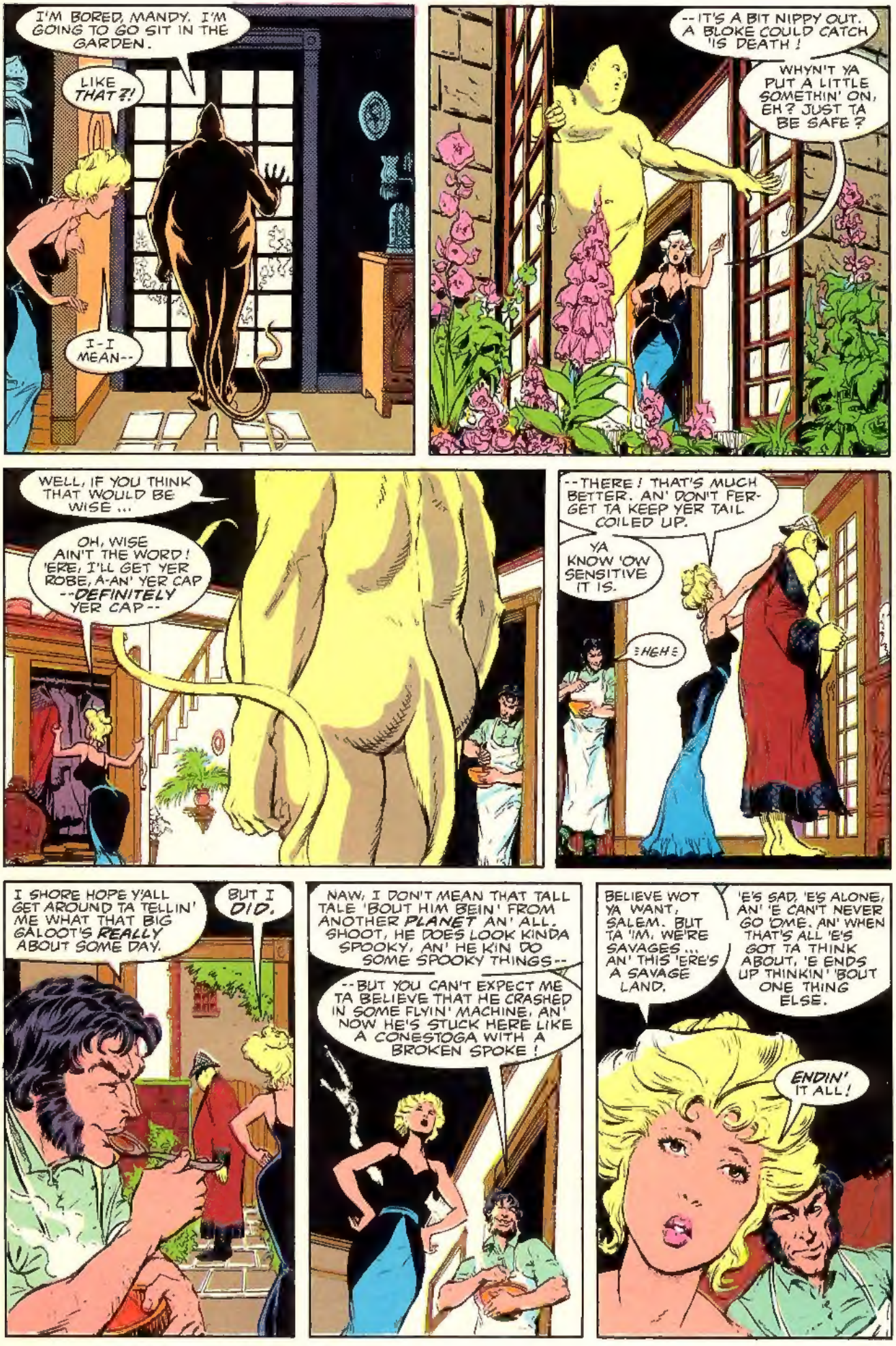
'CAUSE THERE'S SOMETHIN' IN THE AIR THIS EVENIN'. SOMETHIN' WEIRD. SOMETHIN' WOT JUST...
...AIN'T...

...ROIT?

GHEEEEEEYYAAAAAAH!

The BÖZZ CHRONICLES
"RAISING HELL!"


MORNING. MARACOT ROAD. THE OFFICES AND PRIVATE ROOMS OF "BOSWELL AND FLYNN, CONSULTING DETECTIVES" ...
GOR, SALEM, WOT DIED?
GOSH, THAT'S JUST BREAK-FAST, MIZZ FLYNN. I'M WHIPPIN' UP A BATCH O' MUH FAMOUS GIN-YOO-WINE TEXAS-STYLE CHILI!
HERE, HAVE A TASTE. I THINK SHE'S ABOUT DONE.
WELL, AW-RIGHT, DON'T MIND IF I D--
--ooo!
¿GHACK! ¿ W-W-W-WATER!
AHHH, JEST RIGHT!
YOU ¿KOFF! ¿ Y-YOU YANKS EAT THAT STUFF ¿K-KOFF! ¿ FER BREAK-FAST?!
HECK, L'IL LADY, THAT'S THE BEST TIME! IF THIS STUFF DON'T WAKE YA UP--
--HONEY, YER DEAD!
¿WHEW! ¿ I FEEL LIKE CALLIN' THE BLOODY FIRE BRIGADE TA PUT OUT ME-- BOZZ?
UH, BOZZY?


I'M BORED, MANDY. I'M GOING TO GO SIT IN THE GARDEN.
LIKE THAT?!
I-I MEAN--
--IT'S A BIT NIPPY OUT. A BLOKE COULD CATCH 'IS DEATH!
WHYN'T YA PUT A LITTLE SOMETHIN' ON, EH? JUST TA BE SAFE?
WELL, IF YOU THINK THAT WOULD BE WISE ...
OH, WISE AIN'T THE WORD! 'ERE, I'LL GET YER ROBE, A-AN' YER CAP --DEFINITELY YER CAP--
--THERE! THAT'S MUCH BETTER. AN' DON'T FER-GET TA KEEP YER TAIL COILED UP.
YA KNOW 'OW SENSITIVE IT IS.
=HEH=
I SHORE HOPE Y'ALL GET AROUND TA TELLIN' ME WHAT THAT BIG GALOOT'S REALLY ABOUT SOME DAY.
BUT I DID.
NAW, I DON'T MEAN THAT TALL TALE 'BOUT HIM BEIN' FROM ANOTHER PLANET AN' ALL. SHOOT, HE DOES LOOK KINDA SPOOKY, AN' HE KIN DO SOME SPOOKY THINGS--
--BUT YOU CAN'T EXPECT ME TA BELIEVE THAT HE CRASHED IN SOME FLYIN' MACHINE, AN' NOW HE'S STUCK HERE LIKE A CONESTOGA WITH A BROKEN SPOKE!
BELIEVE WOT YA WANT, SALEM. BUT TA 'IM, WE'RE SAVAGES ... AN' THIS 'ERE'S A SAVAGE LAND.
'E'S SAD. 'E'S ALONE, AN' 'E CAN'T NEVER GO 'OME. AN' WHEN THAT'S ALL 'E'S GOT TA THINK ABOUT, 'E ENDS UP THINKIN' 'BOUT ONE THING ELSE.
ENDIN' IT ALL!

MATTER O' FACT, THE REASON I SET UP THIS SLEUTHIN' BUSINESS IN THE FIRST PLACE WAS TA KEEP BOZZY'S GREY MATTER OCCUPIED, TA KEEP 'IM FROM THOUGHTS O' THE NOOSE.
WELL, THAT AN' TA KEEP ME FROM 'AVIN' TA PLY ME TRADE ON THE STREETS, IF YA KNOW WOT I MEAN.
BUT THINGS IS STARTIN' TA GET TICKLISH AGAIN. WE AIN'T 'AD NO NEW CASES SINCE LORD GILES, THAT POLITICIAN WOT KEPT COMIN' BACK TA LIFE.
Y'KNOW, THE ONE WHERE WE MET YOU, SALEM.
YEAH, I BEEN MEANIN' TA ASK Y'ALL ABOUT THAT. I MEAN, YOU FOLKS HAVE BEEN REAL KIND TA ME--
--GIVIN' ME A PLACE TA STAY AN' ALL. BUT, WELL, I WAS SORTA WONDERIN' ...
...WHY?
BECAUSE WE LIKES YA. BESIDES WHICH I WAS RIGHT IMPRESSED WITH THE WAY YA BASH BURLY 'OOLIGANS AROUND. I WAS 'OPIN' YA'D STAY ON WITH US, TA TAKE CARE O' THE ...
...PHYSICAL STUFF.
A JOB?
HECKFIRE, L'IL LADY, I'M YER MAN!
SOUNDS PROMISIN'.
NOK NOK
I'LL GET THE DOOR.
YEAH?
IS THIS THE FIRM OF "BOSWELL & FLYNN"? HOWCHA DO. I'M--

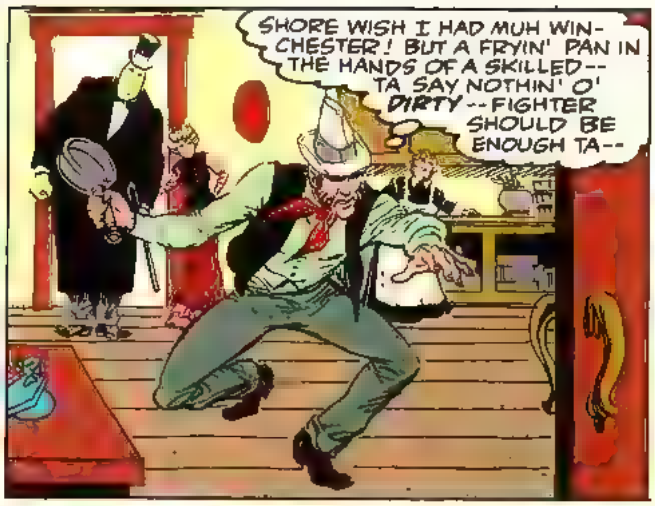
--INSPECTOR COLIN FITZROY, WITH THE C.I.D., SCOTLAND YARD. I'M FOLLOWING UP ON THE DEATH OF LORD GILES MORGAN, A CASE IN WHICH I BELIEVE YOUR, UM, AGENCY WAS IN-VOLVED.
THAT'S RIGHT, GUV. C'MON IN.
I'M AMANDA FLYNN.
PUT 'ER THERE, PARDNER! I'M SALEM HAWKSHAW!
FROM THE COLONIES. OBVIOUSLY.
NOW, MISS FLYNN, AS I WAS SAYING...
WHY THAT STUCK-UP, LOW-DOWN SONOVA--
'ALF A MO', GUV. LORD GILES KICKED IT IN WEEKS AGO. 'OW COME YA WAITED THIS LONG TA COME CALLIN'?
TO BE FRANK, MISS FLYNN, I'VE BEEN QUITE BUSY WITH A SERIES OF DIFFICULT MURDERS. BUT--
REALLY? ANYTHIN'... BIZARRE ABOUT 'EM?
NO. ACTUALLY, THEY'VE BEEN RATHER TIDY.
BUT IF IT'S THE OUTRÉ THAT INTRIGUES YOU...
...YOU MIGHT FIND INTEREST IN A CASE THAT CAME UP THIS MORNING: SEEMS AN EX-CONVICT WAS FOUND IN AN ALLEY OFF PARK LANE, DROOL-ING AND BABBLING ABOUT DEMONS THAT RAINED FROM THE SKY AND THEN DISAPPEARED!
SKIK
SKIK-IK
SKIK
SKIK
BLIMEY, THAT'S PERFECT! JUST WOT BOZZY NEE--
I- I MEAN, 'OW QUAINT.
YOU THINK SO? THEN PERHAPS WE COULD CONTINUE THIS DISCUSSION OVER BRUNCH. AT CARSTAIRS?
"CARSTAIRS"? THE MOST EXCLUSIVE CLUB IN LONDON? BUT, I 'EARD THEY DON'T LET NO WOMEN IN.
DEAR LADY, MANY RULES BECOME FLEXIBLE... WHEN ONE'S FAMILY OWNS THE CLUB!

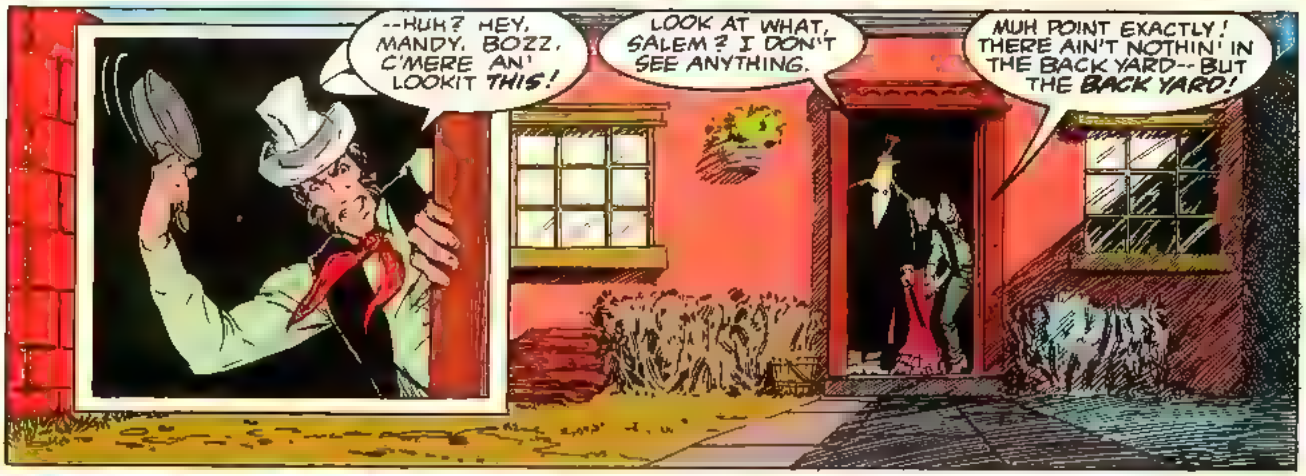
HOLD ON A SECOND, FELLA. MANDY DON'T NEED TO GO NOWHERE. WE GOT PLENTY O' GOOD FOOD RIGHT HERE!
OH? AND ARE YOU GOING TO PREPARE SOME WHEN YOU FINISH TOSSING OUT THAT GARBAGE?
GARB--? Y-YOU CALLED MUH CHILI GARB--?!
WHY YOU SIDEWINDIN', SOW-BELLIED POLECAT! YUH'LL BE CHEWIN' WITH NEKKID GUMS BY THE TIME I FINISH WITH --
OH, MANDY.
I'D COVER THE BULBS IN THE GARDEN IF I WERE YOU. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE AN EARLY FROST THIS YEAR.
I SAY, I DO A BIT OF GARDENING MYSELF, SIR.
AND I'D BE INTERESTED IN THE SOURCE OF YOUR INFORMATION.
CERTAINLY. A VERY NICE SQUIRREL TOLD ME.
A-- WHAT?!
GOR, BOZZY, YA DONE IT AGAIN!
I'D, UH, LOVE TA TAKE YA UP ON YER INVITE, INSPECTOR, BUT RIGHT NOW WE'VE GOT AN APPOINTMENT WITH MR. BOSWELL'S, ER, TAILOR!
SORRY TA RUSH YA OFF G'BYE!
=WHEW!= DON'T KNOW WOT A BLIGHTER WITH THAT MUCH BRAINS -- LET ALONE LOOT -- IS DOIN' WITH THE YARD. BUT I COULD SEE THE SUSPICION GROWIN' BE'IND 'IS EYES!
THAT'S ONE COPPER WE'RE GONNA 'AVE TA WATCH!

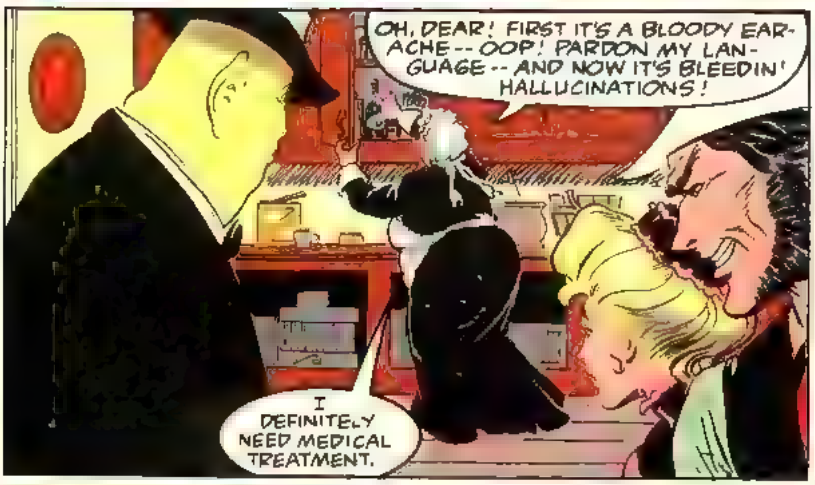
THAT BOSWELL CHAP BEARS WATCHING. THERE'S SOMETHING NOT ENTIRELY NORMAL ABOUT THE FELLOW
I DO BELIEVE I'LL HAVE TO KEEP AN EYE ON HIM.
AND, I MIGHT ADD, BOTH EYES ON THE ALLURING MISS FLYNN!
MORNING AGES. THEN DIES, GIVING BIRTH TO AN AFTERNOON OF UNREMITTING GREY... A CLOUD-DRAPED TWILIGHT THAT SIFTS THROUGH THE WELL-KEPT RESIDENCES ON PARK LANE, SEEPING PAST PAINTED FACADES--
--AND INTO THE CHAMBERS BEYOND.
BLAST AN BOTHER! WHAT A DAY!
I USUALLY LOOK FORWARD TO THE ROBINSONS GO NG ON HOLIDAY, SO'S I CAN TEND TO MY CHORES WITHOUT THEM KIDS GETTIN' UNDERFOOT. BUT--
--I AIN'T ENJOYED TODAY AT ALL!
I'VE BEEN FEELIN' FUNNY, KINDA CHILL-LIKE.
AN' MY EAR'S STARTIN' TO HURT AGAIN!
AH, WELL, MIGHT AS NOT GO HANG THE LAUNDRY. WHO KNOWS? THE FRESH AIR MIGHT DO ME A WORLD OF--
EEP!

WELL BOZZY, 'ERE WE ARE ON PARK LANE MAYBE IF WE NOSE ABOUT A LITTLE, WE CAN FIND THE REASON BEH'ND THEM RAININ' DEVILS!
AIN'T IT EXCITIN'?
ACTUALLY MANDY, IT'S QUITE PROBABLE THAT THE DEMONS THAT UNFORTUNATE GENTLEMAN REFERED TO ORIGINATED AT THE BOTTOM OF A GIN BOTTLE.
THEY FREQUENTLY DO.
I'M BORED
EEEEEEK!
LORDY!
WOT THE-?
I-IT'S IN THE BACK YARD! B-BIG AS THE HOUSE! BIGGER!
A-A-A-MONSTER!
A MONSTER?
I DO BELIEVE WE SHOULD LOOK INTO TH S MANDY
BLESS YA MUM!
DON'TCHA FRET NONE MA'AM! YORE SAFE IN THE HANDS O BOSWELL AN' FLYNN.
AND, UH HAWKSHAW, O COURSE!

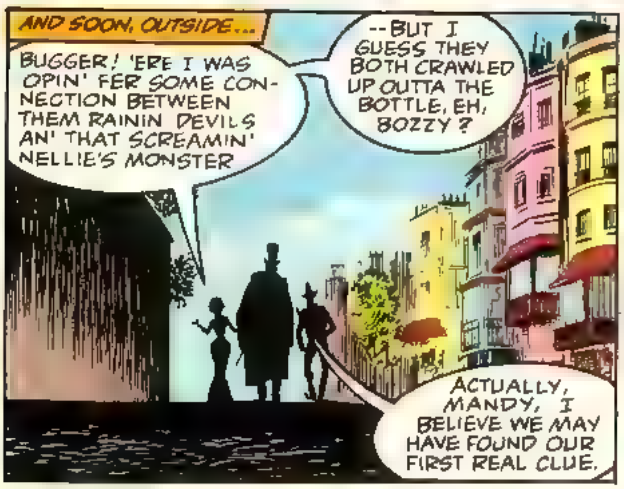
IT'S THROUGH THERE! OUT BACK! IT'S EYE WAS AS BIG AS THE DOOR!
YOU JUST STAY HERE, MA'AM! I'LL TAKE CARE O' TH'S!

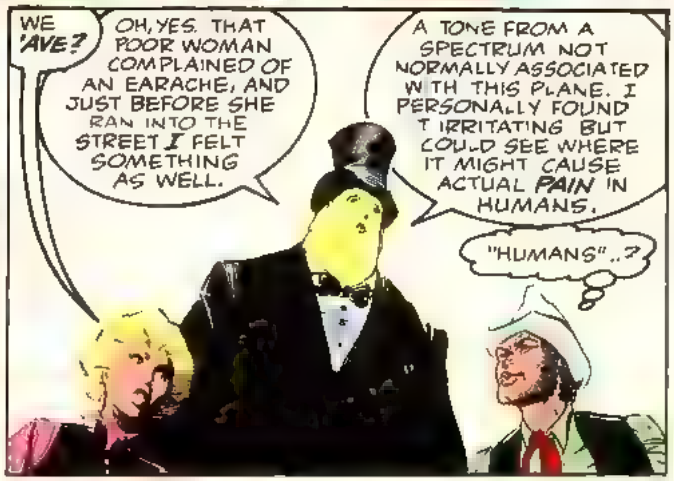

SHORE WISH I HAD MUH WINCHESTER! BUT A FRYIN' PAN IN THE HANDS OF A SKILLED-- TA SAY NOTHIN' O' DIRTY--FIGHTER SHOULD BE ENOUGH TA--

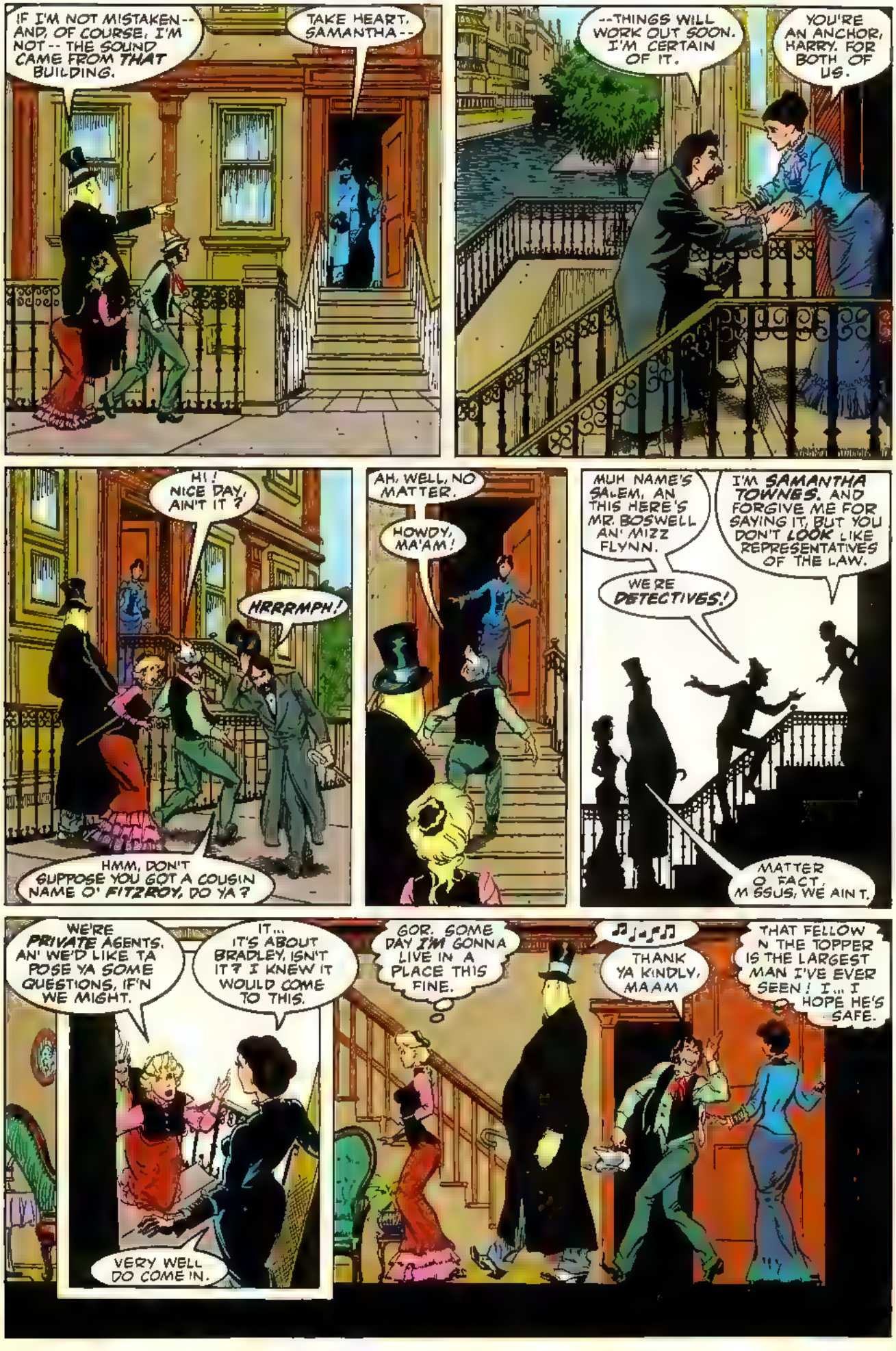

--HUH? HEY, MANDY, BOZZ, C'MERE AN' LOOKIT THIS!
LOOK AT WHAT, SALEM? I DON'T SEE ANYTHING.
MUH POINT EXACTLY! THERE AIN'T NOTHIN' IN THE BACK YARD-- BUT THE BACK YARD!

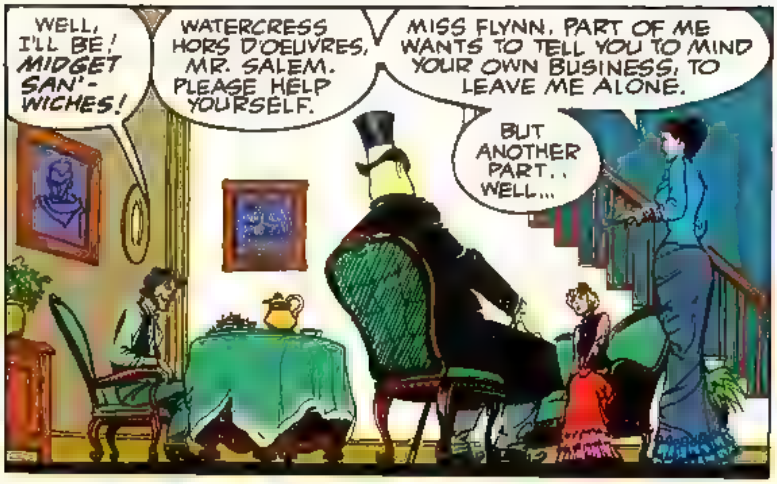

OH, DEAR! FIRST IT'S A BLOODY EARACHE-- OOP! PARDON MY LANGUAGE-- AND NOW IT'S BLEEDIN' HALLUCINATIONS!
I DEFINITELY NEED MEDICAL TREATMENT.

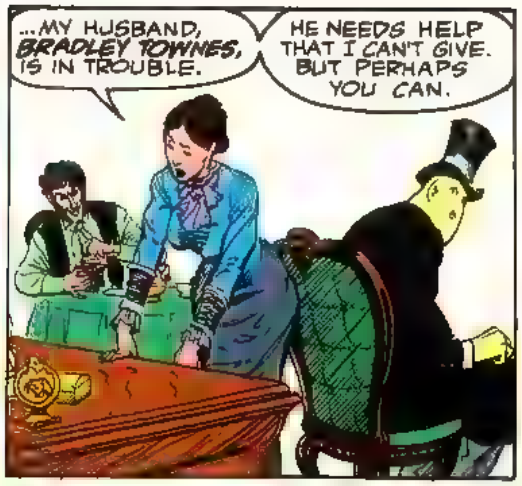
YEAH, I ALWAYS DID PREFER COOKIN' SHERRY TA COD LIVER OIL MUHSELF! SHEH!E

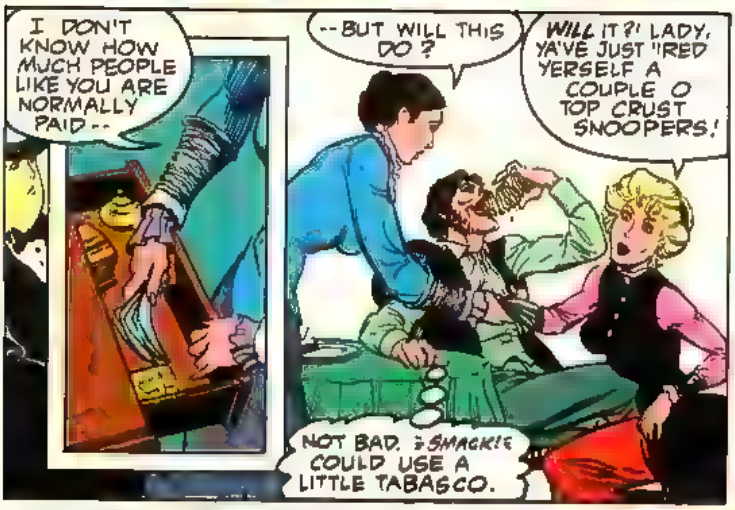

AND SOON, OUTSIDE...
BUGGER! 'ERE I WAS OPIN' FER SOME CONNECTION BETWEEN THEM RAININ DEVILS AN' THAT SCREAMIN' NELLIE'S MONSTER
--BUT I GUESS THEY BOTH CRAWLED UP OUTTA THE BOTTLE, EH, BOZZY?
ACTUALLY, MANDY, I BELIEVE WE MAY HAVE FOUND OUR FIRST REAL CLUE.

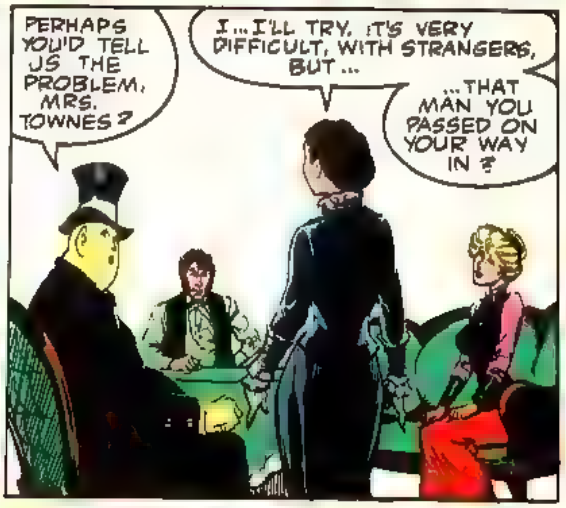

WE 'AVE?
OH, YES. THAT POOR WOMAN COMPLAINED OF AN EARACHE, AND JUST BEFORE SHE RAN INTO THE STREET I FELT SOMETHING AS WELL.
A TONE FROM A SPECTRUM NOT NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PLANE. I PERSONALLY FOUND IT IRRITATING BUT COULD SEE WHERE IT MIGHT CAUSE ACTUAL PAIN IN HUMANS.
"HUMANS"..?


IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN-- AND, OF COURSE, I'M NOT-- THE SOUND CAME FROM THAT BUILDING.
TAKE HEART, SAMANTHA--
--THINGS WILL WORK OUT SOON. I'M CERTAIN OF IT.
YOU'RE AN ANCHOR, HARRY. FOR BOTH OF US.
HI! NICE DAY, AIN'T IT?
HRRRMPH!
HMM, DON'T SUPPOSE YOU GOT A COUSIN NAME O' FITZROY, DO YA?
AH, WELL, NO MATTER.
HOWDY, MA'AM!
MUH NAME'S SALEM, AN' THIS HERE'S MR. BOSWELL AN' MIZZ FLYNN.
I'M SAMANTHA TOWNES. AND FORGIVE ME FOR SAYING IT, BUT YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LAW.
WE'RE DETECTIVES!
MATTER O FACT, M'SSUS, WE AIN'T.
WE'RE PRIVATE AGENTS, AN' WE'D LIKE TA POSE YA SOME QUESTIONS, IF'N WE MIGHT.
IT... IT'S ABOUT BRADLEY, ISN'T IT? I KNEW IT WOULD COME TO THIS.
VERY WELL DO COME IN.
GOR. SOME DAY I'M GONNA LIVE IN A PLACE THIS FINE.
THANK YA KINDLY, MAAM
THAT FELLOW N THE TOPPER IS THE LARGEST MAN I'VE EVER SEEN! I... I HOPE HE'S SAFE.

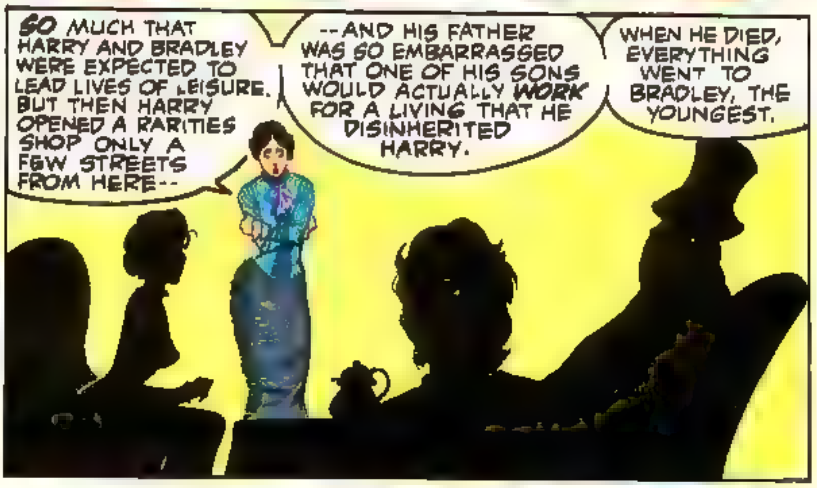

WELL, I'LL BE! MIDGET SAN'-WICHES!
WATERCRESS HORS D'OEUVRES, MR. SALEM. PLEASE HELP YOURSELF.
MISS FLYNN, PART OF ME WANTS TO TELL YOU TO MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, TO LEAVE ME ALONE.
BUT ANOTHER PART.. WELL...

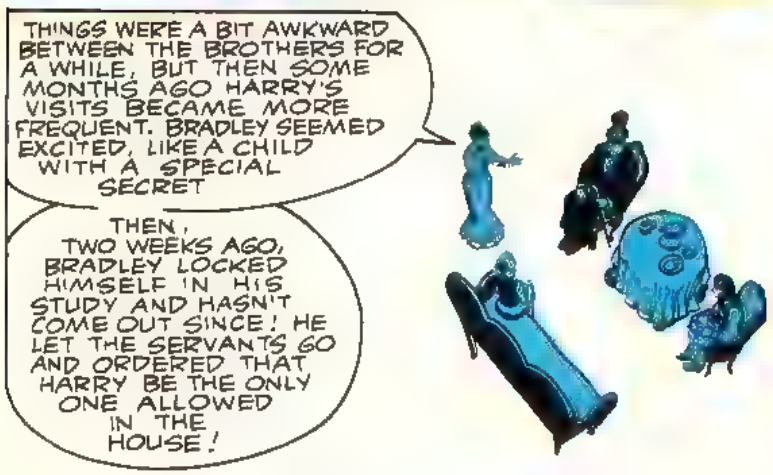

...MY HUSBAND, BRADLEY TOWNES, IS IN TROUBLE.
HE NEEDS HELP THAT I CAN'T GIVE. BUT PERHAPS YOU CAN.


I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH PEOPLE LIKE YOU ARE NORMALLY PAID--
--BUT WILL THIS DO?
WILL IT?! LADY, YA'VE JUST HIRED YERSELF A COUPLE O TOP CRUST SNOOPERS!
NOT BAD. SMACK! I COULD USE A LITTLE TABASCO.


PERHAPS YOU'D TELL US THE PROBLEM, MRS. TOWNES?
I...I'LL TRY. IT'S VERY DIFFICULT, WITH STRANGERS, BUT...
...THAT MAN YOU PASSED ON YOUR WAY IN?

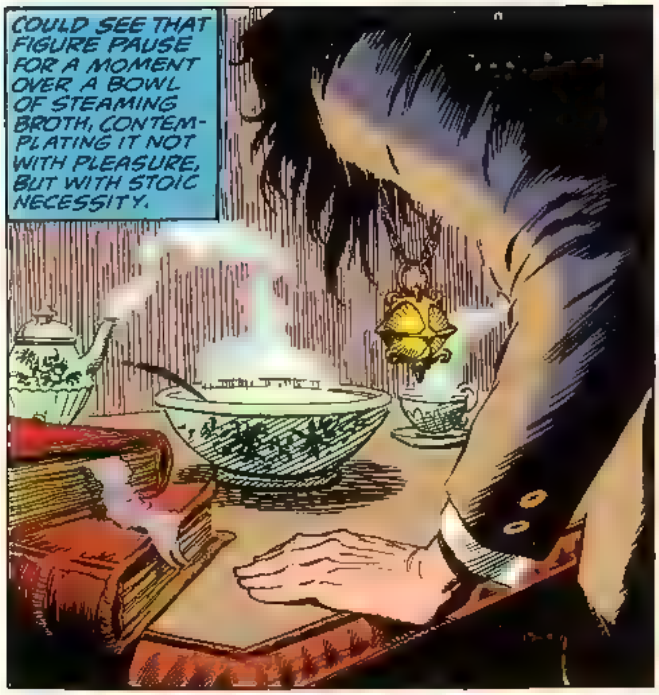
THAT WAS BRADLEY'S BROTHER, HARRISON.
THEY WERE QUITE CLOSE AS CHILDREN.
AND QUITE COMFORTABLE--THE TOWNES FAMILY HAD A LOT OF MONEY.


SO MUCH THAT HARRY AND BRADLEY WERE EXPECTED TO LEAD LIVES OF LEISURE. BUT THEN HARRY OPENED A RARITIES SHOP ONLY A FEW STREETS FROM HERE--
--AND HIS FATHER WAS SO EMBARRASSED THAT ONE OF HIS SONS WOULD ACTUALLY WORK FOR A LIVING THAT HE DISINHERITED HARRY.
WHEN HE DIED, EVERYTHING WENT TO BRADLEY, THE YOUNGEST.

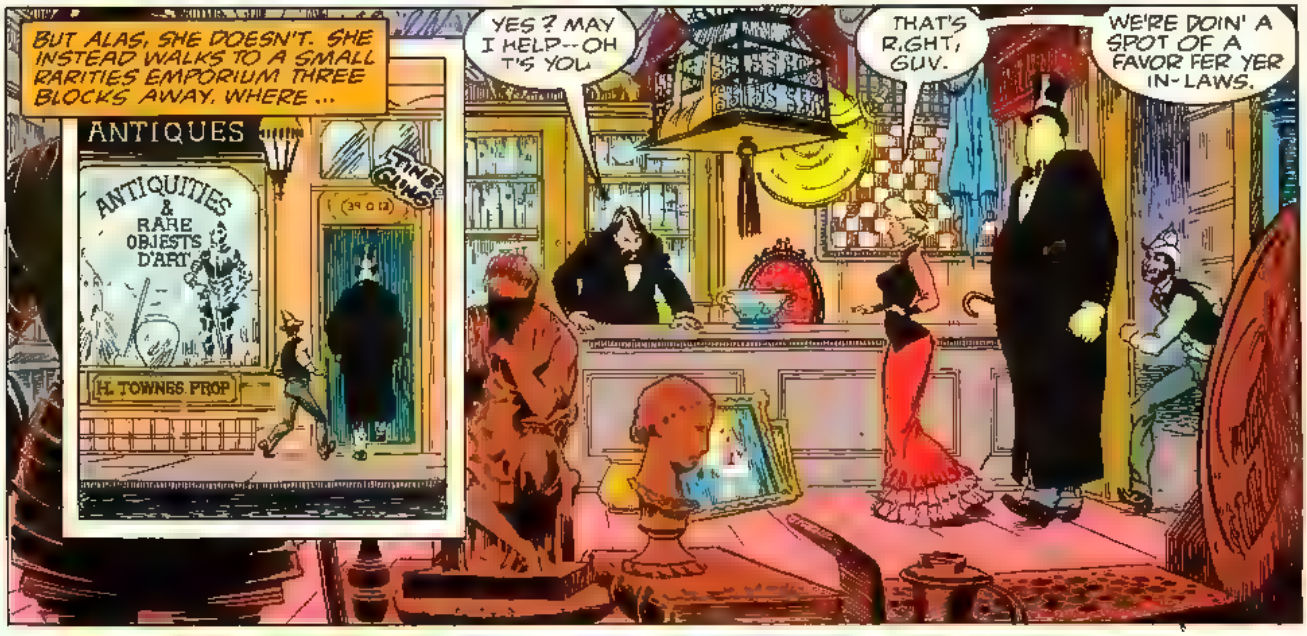

THINGS WERE A BIT AWKWARD BETWEEN THE BROTHERS FOR A WHILE, BUT THEN SOME MONTHS AGO HARRY'S VISITS BECAME MORE FREQUENT. BRADLEY SEEMED EXCITED, LIKE A CHILD WITH A SPECIAL SECRET
THEN, TWO WEEKS AGO, BRADLEY LOCKED HIMSELF IN HIS STUDY AND HASN'T COME OUT SINCE! HE LET THE SERVANTS GO AND ORDERED THAT HARRY BE THE ONLY ONE ALLOWED IN THE HOUSE!

I'M TAKING QUITE A CHANCE BY EVEN LETTING YOU INTO THE PARLOR, BUT..
...I HAD TO DO SOMETHING.

IT MIGHT HELP IF WE WERE TO SPEAK WITH YOUR HUSBAND IN PERSON, MRS. TOWNES.
WELL, I SUPPOSE IT WOULDN'T HURT TO TRY.
HIS STUDY IS UP STAIRS.
THANK HEAVENS! THE LUNCHEON TRAY I LEFT IN FRONT OF THE STUDY DOOR IS GONE
AT LEAST HE'S EATING.
BRADLEY? THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE HERE TO SEE YOU.
NOK NOK
I THINK IT WOULD BE NICE IF YOU--
THUNDERATION, SAMANTHA, I TOLD YOU I REQUIRED PRIVACY! AND IF YOU CAN'T SUPPLY IT--
--BY GADFREY I'LL SEND YOU AWAY LIKE I DID THE SERVANTS!
I--I'M SORRY
BRADLEY'S NOT HIMSELF.
WE UNNERSTAND, MISSUS
NOW YOU JUST CALM Y'SELF WITH BOSWELL AN' FLYNN ON THE JOB, YER FRETTIN' DAYS IS NUMBERED!
HOWEVER, AMANDA FLYNN MIGHT WELL ALTER THAT OPINION--
--IF SHE COULD BUT PEER AT THAT SAME MOMENT INTO THE SHADOWED CONFINES OF BRADLEY TOWNES' STUDY.
COULD SEE THE AWKWARD FIGURE THAT LURCHES STUMBLINGLY TO AN OAKEN DESK SCATTERED DEEP WITH OCCULT PARAPHERNALIA.


COULD SEE THAT FIGURE PAUSE FOR A MOMENT OVER A BOWL OF STEAMING BROTH, CONTEMPLATING IT NOT WITH PLEASURE, BUT WITH STOIC NECESSITY.

IF SHE COULD THEN SEE THAT FIGURE SIT AT THE DESK, RESOLUTELY...
...AND..
SMLUP!


BUT ALAS, SHE DOESN'T. SHE INSTEAD WALKS TO A SMALL RARITIES EMPORIUM THREE BLOCKS AWAY, WHERE ...
ANTIQUES
ANTIQUITIES & RARE OBJESTS D'ART
H. TOWNES PROP
YES ? MAY I HELP--OH T'S YOU.
THAT'S RIGHT, GUV.
WE'RE DOIN' A SPOT OF A FAVOR FER YER IN-LAWS.

GOT SOME QUESTIONS TA ASK 'BOUT WOT'S GOIN' ON 'TWIXT YOU AN' YER BROTHER'
I HAVE BUT ONE THING TO TELL YOU, YOUNG WOMAN.

KEEP YOUR NOSE OUT OF OTHER PEOPLE'S AFFAIRS!
AH! I'M AFRAID I'VE MADE A MISTAKE THERE IS ONE OTHER THING I HAVE TO SAY.
GOOD DAY!

WELL OF ALL THE CHEEKY, FOUL-TEMPERED TROLLS--!
JUST A MOMENT! THAT BULKY CHAP WAS FONDLING ONE OF MY PRIZE PIECES! A COPPER BACK-SCRATCHER!
AND NOW T'S GONE!
WOT?! YER SAYIN' WE SNATCHED IT? WHY, I OUGHTS TA COME OVER THERE AN' RIP THEM W'ISKERS RIGHT OFFA YER--
WHAT WAS THE PRICE OF THE ITEM IN QUESTION, SIR?
EH? WELL, UM, IT WAS 16TH CENTURY, TOP QUALITY, HAND-WORKED.
TWO POUNDS SIX, AND A BARGAIN AT THAT.
PLEASE PAY THE MAN, MANDY.
WOT? THEN YA DID--?
AWWW, BOZZY...!
MOMENTS LATER, AFTER THE GRUDGING TRANSACTION HAS BEEN COMPLETED...
I DON'T GET T, BOZZY! YA NEVER MENTIONED ITCHIN' BEFORE! WHY'D YA NEED A BLOOMIN' COPPER BACK-SCRATCHER?!?
IT'S QUITE SIMPLE, MANDY.
I WAS HUNGRY.
GOR, THE MORE I LEARNS ABOUT YA, THE LESS I UNNERSTAND-- 'EY! THAT WIND! WOT THE DEVIL--?
UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, MANDY, I'D SAY THAT YOUR TERMINOLOGY WAS SURPRISINGLY--

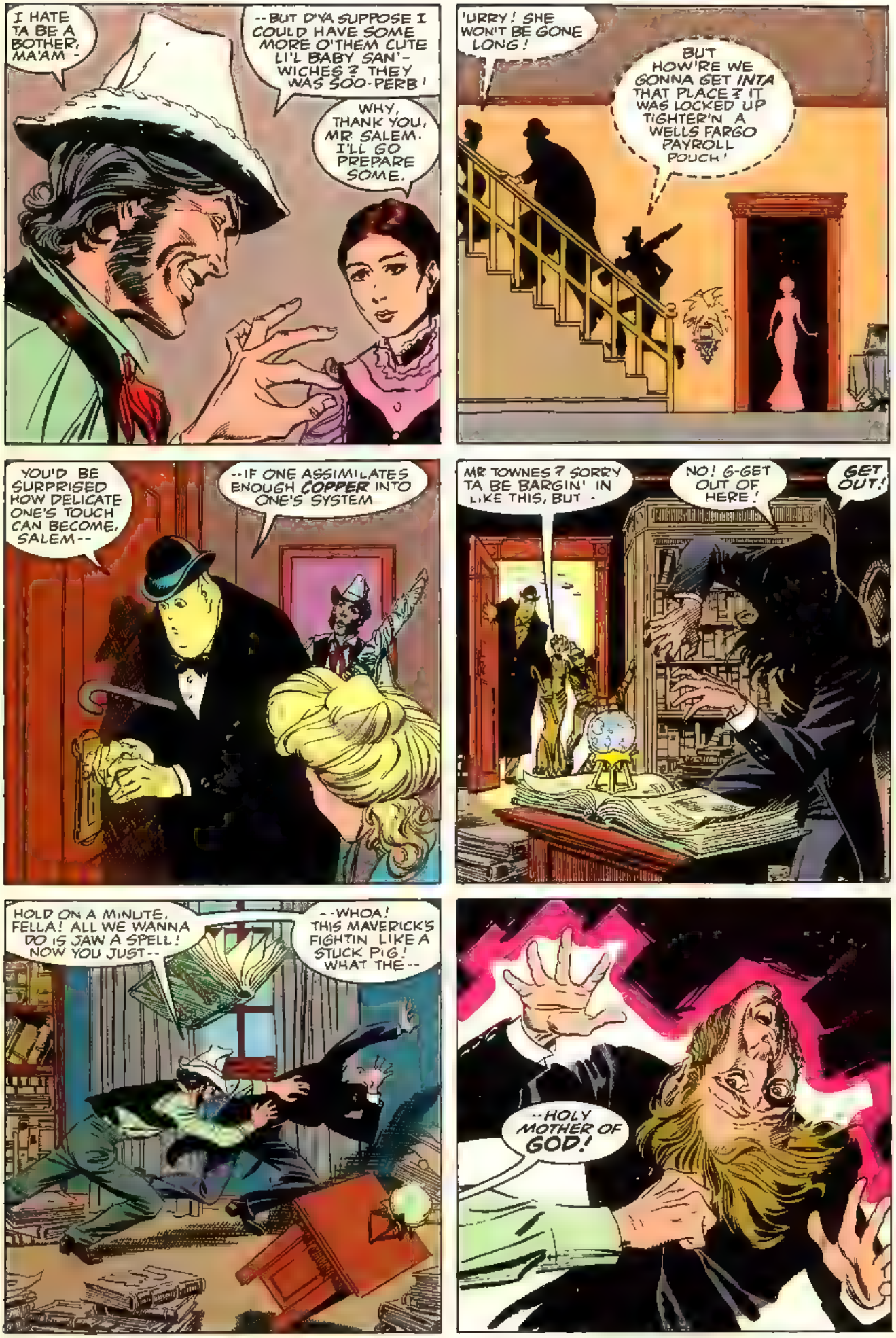
...WELL-CHOSEN!
AAIIIEEEEEE!
LORDY! THAT CRITTER'S UGLIER THAN EL PASO ON A SATURDAY NIGHT!
A-AN' IT'S HUNGRY TA BOOT!
LEGGO, YA SNAGGLE-TOOTHED GULLY-CRAWLER!
BO-ZEEEEE! GET OFF YER DUFF AN' DO SOMETHIN'!
THWUMP
YOU MAY BE RIGHT, MANDY
THINGS DO APPEAR TO BE GETTING OUT OF HAND.

HMM. THIS STRUCTURE IS MADE OF IRON ALLOY, ONE OF THE STRONGER METALS ON THIS PLANET.
IT SHOULD DO NICELY.
KRRR

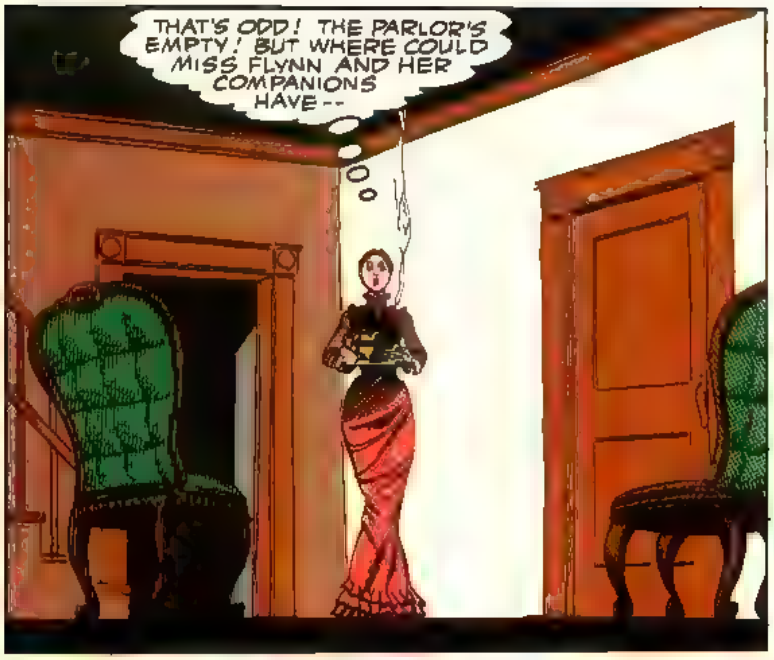
THIS CASE IS GETTING QUITE COMPLICATED, MANDY. THAT APPARITION OBVIOUSLY SHARED ITS ORIGIN WITH THOSE OTHER TWO MONSTROUS SIGHTINGS--
--YET THERE WAS NO TELLTALE AURAL DISCOMFORT ACCOMPANYING ITS APPEARANCE
AN' JUST WOT THE 'ELL DOES THAT MEAN?
I'M NOT CERTAIN. BUT THE ATTACK ITSELF WAS MOST CERTAINLY DIRECTED AT US. AND THAT CAN POINT TO BUT ONE THING:
SOMEONE DOESN'T WANT US TO CONTINUE OUR INVESTIGATION.
ISN'T IT WONDERFUL...?
GREY GROWS TO BLACK, AS NIGHT FOLDS OVER MARACOT ROAD LIKE A BLANKET OF WOVEN DREAMS.
OH, SUZY, DARLIN'--
--DIDN'T MEAN TA CAUSE YUH PAIN...
...WHEN I SAID YER AS CUTE AS A STINKWEED ROOT--
-I DIDN'T KNOW YUH WAS SO VAAAA EEEEN!
BOZZ.?
BLIMEY! FLOATIN' AGAIN! SOME DAY I'LL GET USED TA 'IS WAYS.
YEAH, SOME DAY...
COME IN, MANDY.

I, UM, THOUGHT WE MIGHT CHAT A BIT, BOZZY, 'BOUT THE CASE AN' ALL
THE WAY I GOTS IT FIGGERED OUR NEXT STEP'S TA GET INTA BRADLEY TOWNES' STUDY SOMEWAYS, AN' THEN TALK TA THE MAN PERSONAL-LIKE, Y'KNOW?
ALL RIGHT.
OH, WELL. THEN MAYBE WHEN WE'RE DONE WE COULD TAKE US A BIT OF A 'OLIDAY. NOTHIN' OUTTA THE ORD'N'RY--
--MAYBE SHARK-FISHIN' IN THE GOBI DESERT?
ALL RIGHT.
BLAST IT, BOZZY, YA AIN'T 'EARD A WORD I SA.D! SOME FOLKS CONSIDER ME BLOODY GOOD COMP'NY, MATE! WOT'S YER PROBLEM?!
I'M SORRY, MANDY. I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT..
HOME

...'OME? GOR, BOZZY WOT A LUMP I BEEN.
CAN I 'ELP?
I MEAN, I'VE 'AD FAIR PRACTICE KEEPIN' GENTS FROM BEIN' LONELY...
THANK YOU, MANDY BUT MY NEEDS ARE MORE SPIRITUAL THAN PHYSICAL JUST NOW.
AND I'M AFRAID THERE'S NO ONE ON EARTH WHO CAN TRULY HELP.
'NO ONE ON...?" OH.
RIGHT
WELL. UM, SEE YA IN THE MORNIN' THEN.
G... G'NIGHT.
DAWN SKULKS BACK INTO LONDONTOWN, DRAGGING BEHIND IT A DAY BOTH COOL AND TENUOUS, ALMOST FEARFUL, AS IF AWARE OF WHAT IS SOON TO COME...
TOK! TOK!
'ELLO, MISSUS. SORRY TA BE TROUBLIN' YA, BUT WE GOTS A FEW MORE QUESTIONS TA ASK. AW-RIGHT?
CERTAINLY, MISS FLYNN. PLEASE, MAKE YOURSELVES AT HOME.


I HATE TA BE A BOTHER, MA'AM -
--BUT D'YA SUPPOSE I COULD HAVE SOME MORE O'THEM CUTE LI'L BABY SAN'-WICHES? THEY WAS SOO-PERB!
WHY, THANK YOU, MR SALEM. I'LL GO PREPARE SOME.
'URRY! SHE WON'T BE GONE LONG!
BUT HOW'RE WE GONNA GET INTA THAT PLACE? IT WAS LOCKED UP TIGHTER'N A WELLS FARGO PAYROLL POUCH!
YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW DELICATE ONE'S TOUCH CAN BECOME, SALEM--
--IF ONE ASSIMILATES ENOUGH COPPER INTO ONE'S SYSTEM
MR TOWNES? SORRY TA BE BARGIN' IN LIKE THIS, BUT -
NO! G-GET OUT OF HERE!
GET OUT!
HOLD ON A MINUTE, FELLA! ALL WE WANNA DO IS JAW A SPELL! NOW YOU JUST--
--WHOA! THIS MAVERICK'S FIGHTIN LIKE A STUCK PIG! WHAT THE--
--HOLY MOTHER OF GOD!

H-HIS FACE! I-IT'S UPSIDE-DOWN!
HOW CURIOUS
GORRRRR !
PLEASE! D-DON'T TELL SAMANTHA! I'M SO ASHAMED!
I-I DIDN'T WANT TO HURT ANY-ONE! I DIDN'T MEAN FOR ANY OF THIS TO HAPPEN. Y-YOU'VE GOT TO UNDERSTAND--!
IT WAS HARRY, DON'T YOU SEE? H-HE MADE SOME-THING OF HIS LIFE, WHILE I D'D NOTHING BUT LIVE OFF OUR FATHER'S MONEY! I WAS... JEALOUS!
AND WHEN HARRY BROUGHT SOME ARTIFACTS BY ONE EVENING, ASKING IF I MIGHT KNOW ANY-ONE WHO'D BE INTERESTED IN PURCHASING THEM, I HAD AN IDEA!
THERE WAS AN ANCIENT BOOK OF SPELLS, A AND A MYSTIC ORB
I READ THE BOOK...
...AND FOUND THAT FOCUSING SPELLS THROUGH THE ORB COULD BRING GREAT POWER!
I THOUGHT THAT WITH GREAT POWER I COULD DO GREAT DEEDS, THAT I'D NEVER HAVE TO RESENT MY BROTHER'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS AGAIN!
I BEGAN TO EXPERI-MENT...
...BUT SOMETHING WENT WRONG! I FOLLOWED THE BOOK'S INSTRUC-TIONS TO THE LETTER, BUT EVERY SPELL I CAST WENT AWRY!
I'VE BEEN SEEKING THE SOLUTION EVER SINCE-
--BUT TO NO AVAIL. IN LATER EXPERIMENTS, RELEASING DEMONS AND SUCH, I RE-MAINED CALM ENOUGH TO UNDO THE SPELLS THAT MISFIRED BEFORE THEY BECOME PERMANENT.
BUT I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO REVERSE THE FIRST SPELL I CAST.
THE ONE THAT TURNED MY FACE INTO... INTO...
OH, GOD, I WANT TO DIE


THAT'S ODD! THE PARLOR'S EMPTY! BUT WHERE COULD MISS FLYNN AND HER COMPANIONS HAVE--

THE FRONT DOOR...?
NOK! NOK!

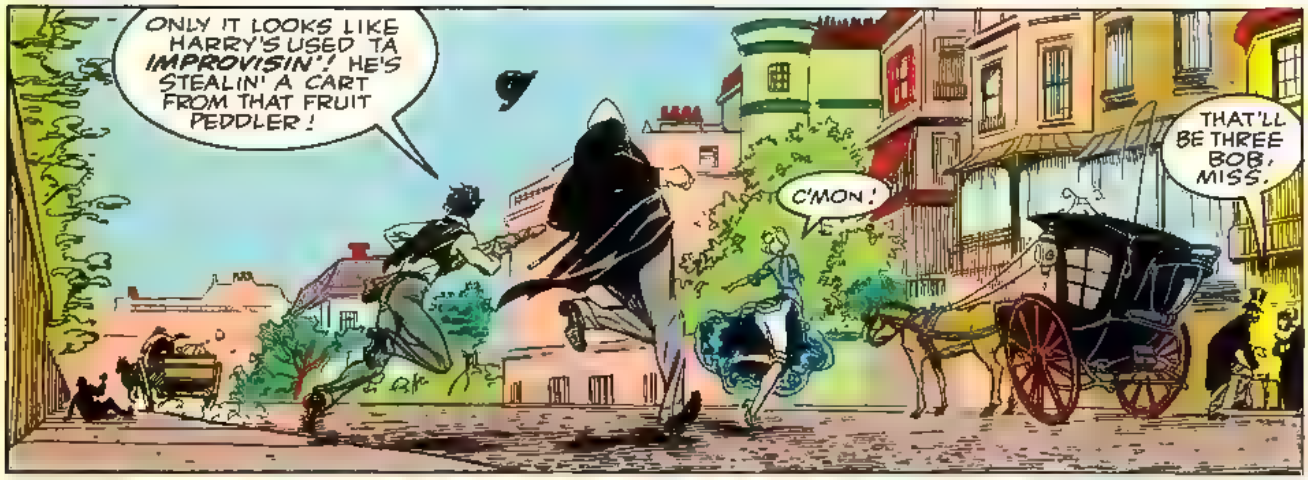
'OLD ON, GUV! IF ALL YER SPELLS BEEN MESSIN' UP, 'OW COME THAT BEASTIE YA SENT AFTER US WORKED SO WELL?
AFTER YOU? BUT I DIDN'T--
OH, LOOK, HARRISON! THE DOOR IS OPEN! BRADLEY MUST BE--

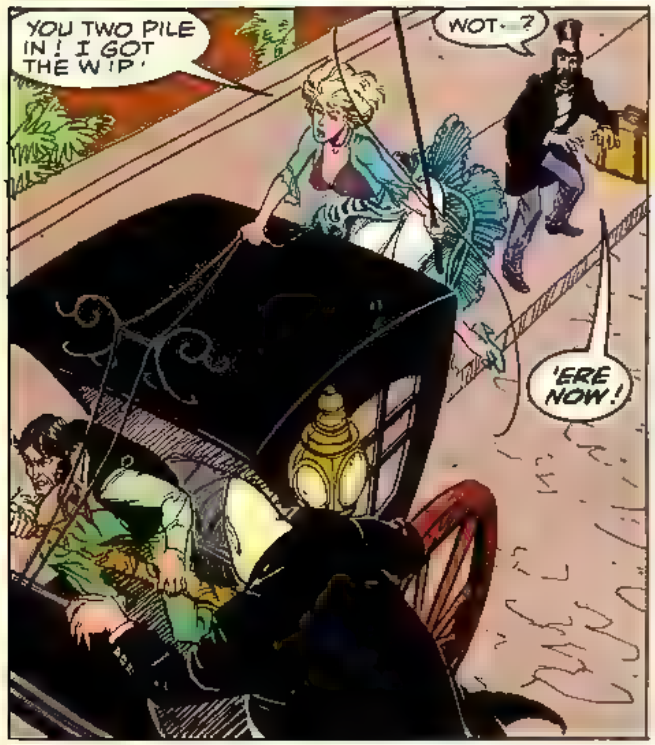
--EEEEEEEEE!
OH, LORD! S-S-SAMANTHA! D-DON'T LOOK AT ME!
HARRY! P-PLEASE--!

TELL HER THESE PEOPLE ARE GOING TO HELP US! TELL HER--!
UNFORTUNATELY, LITTLE BROTHER--

--I'M AFRAID THEY JUST MIGHT!
KBLAM BLAM BLAM

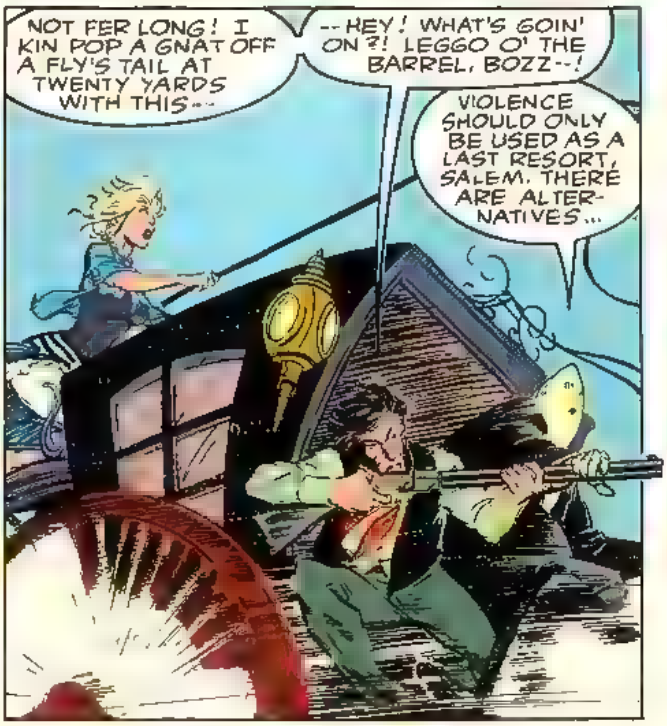
OH, DEAR
I'M AFRAID I'LL NEED A NEW SUIT, MANDY
PTWEENG
PTWANG
PTWEENG
WHA--?! THE GIANT MUST BE WEARING ARMOR PLATE UNDER HIS JACKET!
YOUR FRIEND'S QUEERED THE GAME, LITTLE BROTHER! BUT I'LL GET SATISFACTION YET!
FROM YOUR BLOOD!
KBLAM!
LOOK OUT--!
HE'S OUTTA AMMO, MANDY! I'LL DROP 'IM 'FORE HE HAS A CHANCE TA RELOA--
BLAM! BLAM! CLICK!
EULP!--M-MIZZ TOWNES WENT AN' FAINTED ON ME! HARRY'S GETTIN' AWAY!
SAMANTHA, I... I-I'M SO SORRY...!
GET A MOVE ON, SALEM!
DON'T WORRY, LI'L LADY! THIS TIME I COME PREPARED!

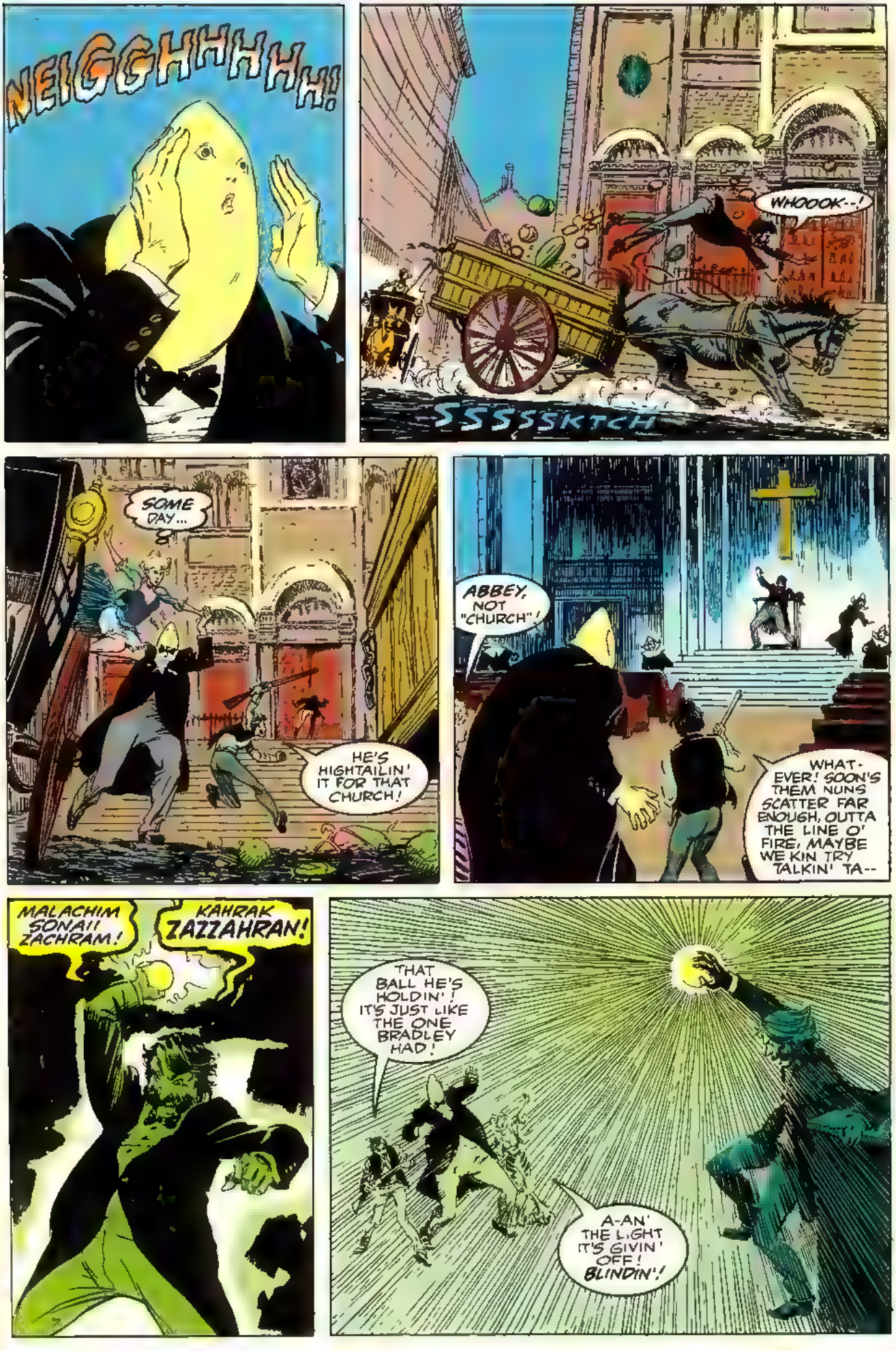

ONLY IT LOOKS LIKE HARRY'S USED TA IMPROVISIN'! HE'S STEALIN' A CART FROM THAT FRUIT PEDDLER!
C'MON!
THAT'LL BE THREE BOB, MISS.


YOU TWO PILE IN! I GOT THE WIP!
WOT-?
'ERE NOW!

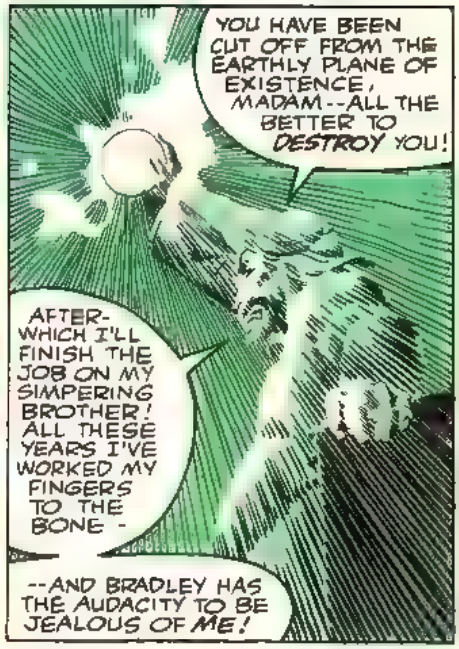
COME BACK WITH THAT! THAT'S ME CAB--!
BANDITS! 'IGHWAYMEN!
POLICE!

IT AIN'T ANY GOOD! 'IS BLOODY CART'S LIGHTER'N OURS!
'E'S PULLIN' AWAY!


NOT FER LONG! I KIN POP A GNAT OFF A FLY'S TAIL AT TWENTY YARDS WITH THIS--
--HEY! WHAT'S GOIN' ON?! LEGGO O' THE BARREL, BOZZ--!
VIOLENCE SHOULD ONLY BE USED AS A LAST RESORT, SALEM. THERE ARE ALTER-NATIVES...

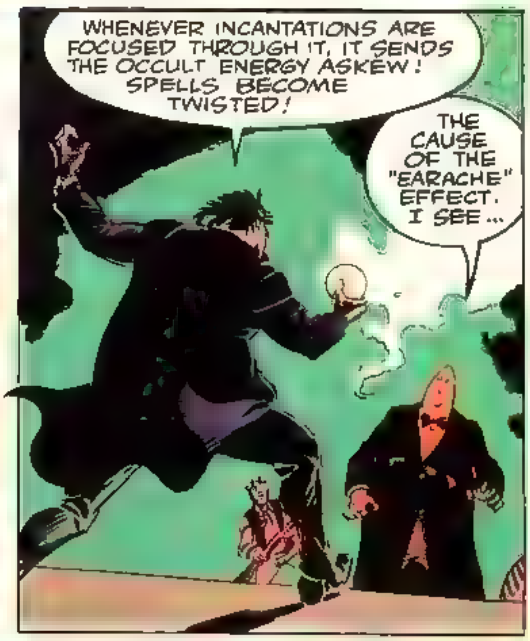

NEIGGHHHHH!
WHOOOK--!
SSSSSKTCH
SOME DAY...
HE'S HIGHTAILIN' IT FOR THAT CHURCH!
ABBEY, NOT "CHURCH"!
WHAT-EVER! SOON'S THEM NUNS SCATTER FAR ENOUGH, OUTTA THE LINE O' FIRE, MAYBE WE KIN TRY TALKIN' TA--
MALACHIM SONA!! ZACHRAM!
KAHRAK ZAZZAHRAN!
THAT BALL HE'S HOLDIN'! IT'S JUST LIKE THE ONE BRADLEY HAD!
A-AN' THE LIGHT IT'S GIVIN' OFF! BLINDIN'!

SWEET JESUS! L-LOOKIT THE WINDOWS!
BOZZY! WOT'S 'APPENIN'?!

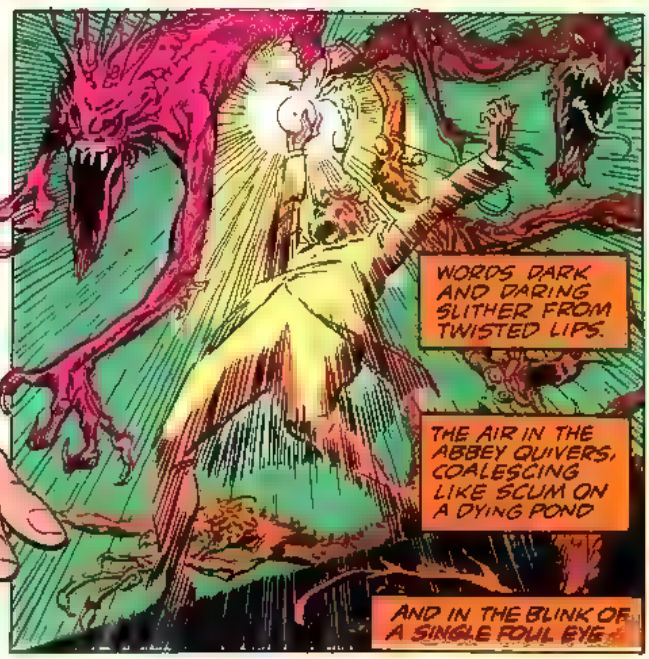

YOU HAVE BEEN CUT OFF FROM THE EARTHLY PLANE OF EXISTENCE, MADAM--ALL THE BETTER TO DESTROY YOU!
AFTER-WHICH I'LL FINISH THE JOB ON MY SIMPERING BROTHER! ALL THESE YEARS I'VE WORKED MY FINGERS TO THE BONE -
--AND BRADLEY HAS THE AUDACITY TO BE JEALOUS OF ME!

I KNEW THE FOOL COULDN'T RESIST THE BOOK AND THE ORB! BUT THAT WAS MERELY THE SURFACE OF MY PLAN!

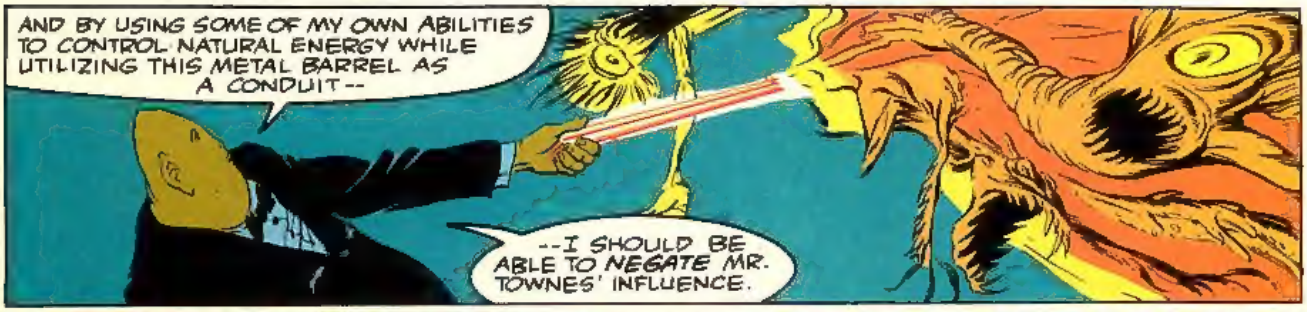
FOR THIS IS THE TRUE MYSTIC ORB!
THE ONE I PROVIDED BRADLEY WAS A DUPLICATE, ONE CRAFTED WITH A FATAL FLAW!


WHENEVER INCANTATIONS ARE FOCUSED THROUGH IT, IT SENDS THE OCCULT ENERGY ASKEW! SPELLS BECOME TWISTED!
THE CAUSE OF THE "EARACHE" EFFECT. I SEE...

I'D HOPED THAT BRADLEY WOULD DIE IN ONE OF HIS EXPERIMENTS, SO THAT I COULD RECEIVE THE INHERITANCE THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN MINE YEARS AGO!
BUT THEN YOU BUTTED IN! I TRIED STOPPING YOU WITH THAT MONSTER IN PARK LANE! IT FAILED...
BUT THIS WON'T!


WORDS DARK AND DARING SLITHER FROM TWISTED LIPS.
THE AIR IN THE ABBEY QUIVERS, COALESCING LIKE SCUM ON A DYING POND
AND IN THE BLINK OF A SINGLE FOUL EYE

--ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE!
UH-OH! A 44-40 DON'T EVEN TICKLE THESE CRITTERS!
KRAK!
LOOKS LIKE WE'LL HAFTA WHOOP 'EM HAND-TA-HAND!
ER, HAND TA-CLAW!
MIGHT I SEE YOUR WEAPON A MOMENT, SALEM?
WELL, UH, SHORE, BUT I DON'T SEE WHAT GOOD--
--ARGH! OF ALL THE CLUMSY, CLODHOPPIN'--!
SNAP!
BOZZY! W-WOT'RE YA DOIN'?!
IT'S REALLY RATHER BASIC, MANDY. HARRISON IS MANIPULATING LINES OF FORCE THAT ARE INVISIBLE TO HUMAN BEINGS, AND ARE THEREFORE CONSIDERED SUPER-NATURAL
I, ON THE OTHER HAND, CAN SEE THEM QUITE CLEARLY.

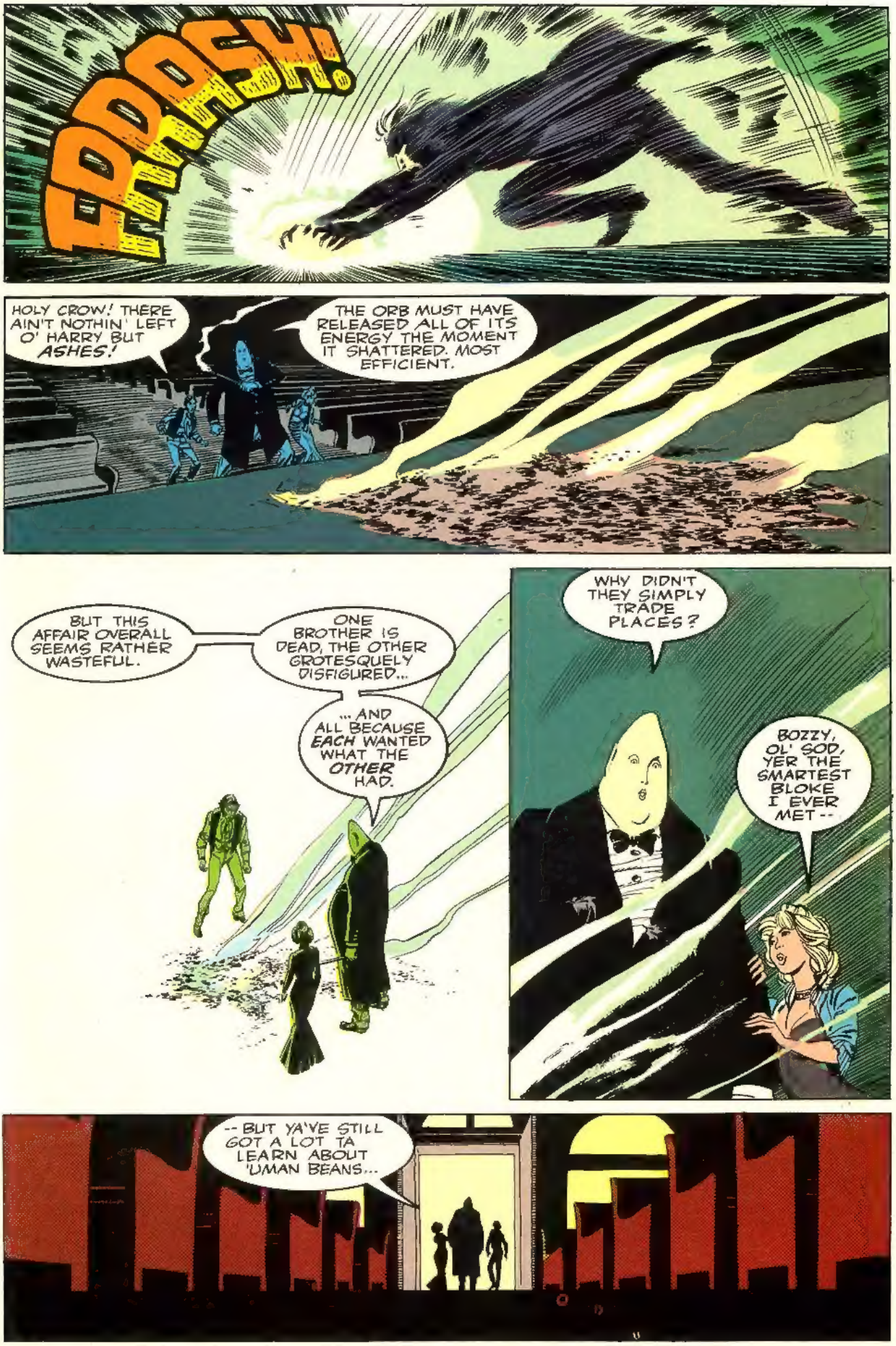

AND BY USING SOME OF MY OWN ABILITIES TO CONTROL NATURAL ENERGY WHILE UTILIZING THIS METAL BARREL AS A CONDUIT--
--I SHOULD BE ABLE TO NEGATE MR. TOWNES' INFLUENCE.

LIKE SO.
SAINTS IN 'EAVEN! THE BARREL'S SUCKIN' THEM MONSTERS UP LIKE A W'IRLPOOL!
WELL, I'LL BE...!

AN' LOOK AT THE WINDOWS! I CAN SEE LONDON AGAIN!
IT'S WORKIN'!

THAT GIANT! H-HE'S EVEN MORE POWERFUL THAN THE ORB! I NEVER FIGURED BRADLEY WOULD BE SMART ENOUGH TO HIRE A SORCERER!

BUT LITTLE BROTHER WON'T HAVE THE PLEASURE OF WITNESSING MY DEFEAT! HE'LL NEVER SEE ME GROVEL! NEVER!
NEV--


FFOOSH!
HOLY CROW! THERE AIN'T NOTHIN' LEFT O' HARRY BUT ASHES!
THE ORB MUST HAVE RELEASED ALL OF ITS ENERGY THE MOMENT IT SHATTERED. MOST EFFICIENT.
BUT THIS AFFAIR OVERALL SEEMS RATHER WASTEFUL.
ONE BROTHER IS DEAD, THE OTHER GROTESQUELY DISFIGURED...
...AND ALL BECAUSE EACH WANTED WHAT THE OTHER HAD.
WHY DIDN'T THEY SIMPLY TRADE PLACES?
BOZZY, OL' SOD, YER THE SMARTEST BLOKE I EVER MET--
--BUT YA'VE STILL GOT A LOT TA LEARN ABOUT 'UMAN BEANS...

EPILOGUE: CLOUDS OF CHARCOAL HUES CLOSE TIGHTLY ABOUT LONDON--
SCOTLAND YARD
--DRAWING A TWILIGHT MANTLE OVER THE END OF THE DAY. A SOFT RAIN BEGINS TO SPILL....
YES, PEMBROOK, WHAT IS IT?
THE JUDICIAL SURGEON'S FINISHED WITH THAT LATEST MURDER VICTIM, INSPECTOR FITZROY. HE SAID YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN ONE OF THE POOR BLIGHTER'S EFFECTS.
SEEMS TO BE A PIECE OF JEWELRY, SIR. BUT IT'S NOT LIKE ANY BAUBLE I'VE EVER SEEN.
VERY WELL, I'LL HAVE A LOOK.
IT'S GOT NUMBERS THAT KEEP CHANGING, LIKE IT WAS SOME SORT OF TIMEPIECE, BUT IT'S GOT NO MOVEMENT, NO TICKING, AND I'M BLAMED IF I CAN FIND WHERE TO WIND THE BLINKIN' THING!
THAT IS ODD!
HMM, EXCELLENT CRAFTSMANSHIP, OBVIOUSLY HAND-FINISHED...
...AH! THERE APPEARS TO BE AN INSCRIPTION ON THE REVERSE SIDE. PERHAPS THAT WILL PROVIDE A CLUE TO--
7:39
--BLAST. NO HELP HERE. IT'S JUST GIBBERISH. "BEST WISHES FROM TEAMSTERS LOCAL #246 TO... JIMMY HOFFA?"

NEXT ISSUE: **"THE TOMORROW MAN!"**

GHEEEEEEYYAAAAAAH!

The BŐZZ CHRONICLES

"RAISING HELL!"